Volume 9, Edition 9

Valley of the Moon Amateur Radio Club WIRELESS

September 2005

ED, W1EJ, OPERATING FROM THE THIRD RAIL

Ed is operating his QRP+ at the Jack London Wolf House after the VOMARC swap at SDC several years ago

FROM THE TOP OF THE HILL

A lot of has been written about hurricane Katrina in the last 2 weeks, but not much about the role of Ham Radio. Literally, hundreds of hams have turned out all along the gulf coast to

assist where needed. Check out the latest ARRL letter for all the details.

The ARRL also became involved by helping to recruit volunteers, coordinate equipment donations and working with regulatory agencies and he news media, Individuals and industry were very generous in their donations of equipment to be sent to the disaster area.

We could be facing a similar disaster here in northern California, but instead of wind and water, we could experience a strong earthquake. BE READY.

Let's welcome our newest member, Matt Young. Matt just passed his general and, at this writing, is waiting for his call.

The officers decided that, instead of a normal meeting this month, we would have a picnic. So the meeting date is the same, but the time is 6:00 pm. We will meet at the picnic area at the Sonoma PD. We could use some help with shopping, cooking, and cleaning, so let me know if you can lend a hand.

As we head towards October, its time to think about nominations for next year's officers. Let us know if you would like to help.

Also, the month of October means it time for Pacificon. This is the closest most of will get to the national ham convention in Dayton. It’s a great event to take in presentations on all aspects of our hobby and an opportunity to visit the huge vendor area where the latest "toys" are on display. For more info, visit http://www.pacificon.org/

That's about it for this month. Hope to see you all at the picnic (next meeting).

73, Jim, K6UUW

AMATEUR RADIO VOLUNTEERS FILLING COMMUNICATION GAPS IN GULF REGION

Hundreds of Amateur Radio operators from the Gulf Coast and elsewhere in the US continue to volunteer their skills and expertise as the Hurricane Katrina relief effort heads into its third week. ARRL Section Managers (SMs) and Section Emergency Coordinators (SECs) across and around the affected region have been teleconferencing daily to keep their efforts on the same page. In the field, Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and other volunteers are assisting as needed to support communication for relief agencies as well as for state and local government and even the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Louisiana SEC Gary Stratton, K5GLS, says Amateur Radio was the only means for state officials at the state emergency operations center (EOC) in Baton Rouge to communicate earlier this week with the so-

called "Florida parishes" above Lake Pontchartrain.

"We have had praise from one end of Louisiana to the other about Amateur Radio operators," Stratton said. "There was a communication to the EOC in Baton Rouge from FEMA that said, 'Ham radio is our prime communications with you, and they should get anything they need,' so FEMA recognizes the importance of ham radio." He also recounted how state officials arriving at the EOC were using ham radio to get through to their hard-hit parishes.

A marshaling center has been established in Covington, Louisiana. ARES has been continuing to support Red Cross shelter and Southern Baptist Convention debris-clearing in St Tammany parish, as well as Baptist Men's Kitchen canteen operations. In Washington Parish, ARES volunteers--including more than a dozen from South Texas--have been providing critical communication among hospitals and the parish EOC, among other functions. Field teams were continuing to use HF to maintain communication with the EOC in Baton Rouge.

Stratton, who's temporarily handed over his SEC duties to former Louisiana SM Al Oubre, K5SDG, said that while things are going along okay right now, he foresees a need for additional operators down the road, once closed areas are reopened. "One of the biggest problems we're going to have is relief for the operators who have been down there [in the affected parishes]," he said.

"New Orleans is, of course, our next thrust, and we're going to have to have to staff recovery efforts down there, but it'll be a different kind of recovery effort," Stratton predicted. "We'll be supporting the EOC in Baton Rouge with temporary communications until the National Guard can get in."

Stratton said Amateur Radio has even had to loan some government agencies their communication gear because their own didn't function. "It's been an eye-opener to me operating in the EOC down there how terribly their equipment operates," he said.

In Mississippi, ARES operators have been helping to maintain communication among hospitals, EOCs and shelters. ARES District Emergency Coordinator Tom Hammack, W4WLF, reported operators were sleeping on the floor when off duty. State RACES Officer and ARES DEC Ron Brown, AB5WF, was setting up a staging area for Amateur Radio volunteers near the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency in Jackson.

SECs in the US Gulf advise volunteers signing up for duty in the hurricane-stricken zones to coordinate with their home SECs and, once given the go-ahead,

arrive as self-sufficient as possible. "If you need it, you bring it," advised Alabama SEC Jay Isbell, KA4KUN. Volunteers have come from all over the US.

Isbell said each Red Cross feeding unit was turning out 25,000 to 30,000 meals a day. "They still need communication," he said. Local amateurs in the affected areas were handling some of the tactical communication on VHF.

A staging area in Montgomery, Alabama, continues to process and orient Amateur Radio volunteers for American Red Cross and other duty in Louisiana and Mississippi. Some volunteers will help support communication at Red Cross shelters set up for evacuees, while others will provide tactical communication for feeding stations or for emergency management. Alabama SM Greg Sarratt, W4OZK, has been coordinating ham radio volunteers at the Montgomery site.

Norm North Jr, WA1DBR, of Arkansas, was deployed to a Red Cross shelter in Biloxi, Mississippi, where he managed to squeeze in some health-and-welfare messages among the emergency traffic.

North says typical requests included pleas from mothers trying to find missing children, youngsters looking for parents and other trying to get word to families and loved ones that they'd survived the storm and were at the shelter. "Many messages got through," North said, "and I received many thanks and hugs."

As conventional telecommunications starts coming back to life, traffic has been slowing on the major regional HF emergency net--the West Gulf ARES Emergency Net on 7.285 MHz days and 3.873 MHz nights. As a result, the net announced September 9 that it would secure routine operation at 0600 UTC September 10. An open net will be maintained on 3.862 MHz after that.

West Gulf ARES Emergency Net Manager Lee Franks, N5FP (ex-AD5IS), says the net passed traffic as recently as September 7 about a man trapped in an attic in Arabi [Louisiana]. "We're still getting a trickle of messages like this," he said earlier this week. "As communications are reestablished via landline and VHF-UHF links in that area, there has been less demand on our net--but I'd call it an absolute, tremendous success what we have done."

There's more information on Amateur Radio's Hurricane Katrina response on the ARRL Web site <http://www.arrl.org>. (from ARRL letter)

RED CROSS TRAINING ON NOW

The Sonoma County Chapter, along with chapters all across the United States, is conducting

intensive and on-going training in Mass Care and Emergency Shelter Operations in response to the disastrous hurricane in the Gulf.

Classes are being held nightly, as well as one weekends, at the Chapter offices at 5297 Aero Drive in Santa Rosa. The classes are preparing volunteer disaster workers for deployment to the affected areas.

The people volunteering are ordinary individuals from every background. They have all come forward motivated by the desire to do something positive and constructive to help mitigate the suffering of the overwhelming number of people forced out of their homes and communities.

The training starts with a three hour course, Introduction to Disaster Services, which serves as an introduction to disaster response. Classes covering Mass Care, Shelter Operations, Family Services, and Disaster Health and Mental health Services are also offered.

The Red Cross has over 36,000 disaster volunteers who are either currently working or have recently been working on disaster relief in the emergency shelters. The shelters provide food, sleeping areas and a safe environment for the displaced evacuees.

Each shelter, whether in the disaster area or outside, as in the Houston Astrodome, need full time staffing around the clock to serve the victims of the hurricane and flood.

The Red Cross is rushing to train an additional 40,000 volunteers, and may need more to staff the long-term shelters that will undoubtedly be needed. Any VOMARC members, family or friends interested in volunteering can contact the Sonoma County Chapter of the Red Cross at 707-577-7600, or visit their website at www.sonomacounty.redcross.org.

Just as athletes cross-train to improve their skills and abilities, so can we better prepare ourselves as amateur radio emergency communications operators by learning how the Red Cross disaster relief organization works by at least taking the Introduction to Disaster Services class.

The three most likely scenarios cited for mass disaster were a terrorist attack in New York, a devastating hurricane in Louisiana and an earthquake in California. What do you suppose will be next?

AS my kindly ol' Scoutmaster always said: "Be Prepared!"

ON CALL
September 2005

Sonoma Op Area has a new facility. It is a 220 mHz repeater on Sonoma Mountain. This new repeater is cleverly licensed as K6ACS and operates on 224.820

with a PL of 103.5 It can be tied in to the 146.730 repeater when needed but is usually on its own. Needless to say, it is very strong in Sonoma Valley and should have the same coverage as the 146.73 machine.

The 220 mHz band is interesting and has some of the propagation characteristics as 144 mHz and 440 mHz. The activity is lower than on either of those bands so if you want to talk a bit, try it. I am hoping that we can start an ACS net on it for those of us who have the capability.

My antenna is a Comet CX-333 which is a tri-bander just like the new one we installed at the Sonoma Valley EOC in March. It is great to have coverage of 144-220-440 mHz in one antenna. I am using an Alinco DR-235T transceiver which is also the same radio we have for 220 in the EOC.

You can get on without too much trouble. The Alinco runs around $270, but you can also get an ADI 30W transceiver for around $210. Alinco also sells a 5W HT for 220 mHz which has all the usual features and would work well at home with a good antenna. This HT sells for about $180.

I can raise ten repeaters from home easily...several are very strong. Here are some of the possibilities: 223.780/131.8; 223.920/85.4; 223.980/100.0; 224.300/82.5; 224.780/77.0. Note all shifts are minus 1.6 mHz. Above frequencies are the repeater outputs where you would listen and the PL frequency for each.

Have fun; see you on 220!

Ken McTaggart N6KM
Sonoma Valley ACS Unit Leader

SALE PAGES

Kantronics All Mode Communicator, a TNC that will do Morse (CW), RTTY, ASCII, AMTOR and Packet on HF and Packet on VHF/UHF. With manual and in good working order. $50.00 N6KM, Ken, 707-938-2626

THE VOMARC WIRELESS

VOLUME 9 EDITION 9

A publication of VOMARC, the Valley of the Moon Amateur Radio Club – W6AJF

Frank C. Jones – W6AJF
Honorary President in Perpetuity

CAST OF CHARACTERS

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Darrel Jones, WD6BOR – Editor

Receipt of the Wireless is one of the most sought after benefits of membership in VOMARC.

CLUB MEETINGS are held on the third Wednesday of each month, alternating between McDougal Hall at the Sonoma Developmental Center, Eldridge, and the Sonoma Fire Station, 630 2nd Street West, Sonoma. Meetings start at 19:30 local (7:30 P.M.).

WEB PAGE:
http://www.vomarc.org/

Nets are held every Wednesday night at 19:30 (7:30 P.M.) local, except meeting nights on the 145.350 repeater, -600 kHz, PL 88.5 Hz.

ACS holds a net each Monday evening at 19:30 local on the 146.205, +600, PL 88.5 Hz repeater.

PACKET STATION INFO: The VOMARC packet station is on 144.910 as "SNV1EC". "SNVGW" can be used as a gateway digipeating on 223.66 MHz. The node name is "SNVND".

CLUB BREAKFASTS are held on the first Saturday of each month at Issa's Restaurant, 18999 Sonoma Highway, Sonoma. The fun starts at 09:30 local.

Comments and submissions of material may be sent to:

wd6bor@vom.com

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1496 Nut Tree Lane
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NOTICE!!! THE NEXT VOMARC MEETING IS A PICNIC ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE SONOMA POLICE DEPARTMENT, 175 FIRST STREET WEST. CU THERE!

VOMARC MEMBERSHIP

VOMARC 2005 Membership Dues: $15/year individual; $5/year family member.

VOMARC encourages its members to join the ARRL. More information is available at www.arrl.org.
QST is available to blind and physically handicapped individuals on audio cassette from the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Call 1-800-424-8567.

Name:_____CALL:_____EMAIL:_____

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Name:_____CALL:_____EMAIL:_____

VOMARC: $_____

Membership Moment, From the Database Queen

Please check the mailing label on this newsletter. It tells you when your VOMARC dues are due. Dues may be mailed to Ken N6KM, or Jim K6UUW, 1496 Nut Tree Lane, Sonoma, CA 95476, or brought to the next meeting. If there is any mistake, please do not shoot the messenger; email Eileen KG6QNT at Eileen@vom.com. Your check should be made payable to: **VOMARC**